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SUBJECT: UNGA: SYG HOLDS DIALOGUE WITH AMBASSADORS ON G-20
SUMMIT, MIDDLE EAST AND DRC

¶1. SUMMARY: United Nations Secretary General (SYG) Ban Ki-moon briefed UN General Assembly (UNGA) Members on the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), his recent visit to Asia and other pressing issues in a November 10 meeting. On the financial crisis, he agreed to relay Members' concerns about its potential impacts during the upcoming G-20 Summit in Washington. Ban also discussed UNAMID force deployments, the November 12-13 UN Interfaith Dialogue and he pledged to continue to make UN operations more efficient. END SUMMARY.

G-20 SUMMIT ON THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

¶2. At a November 10 briefing with UNGA Ambassadors, the Secretary General welcomed his invitation to attend the November 15 Summit of G-20 leaders in Washington. He characterized the Summit as a positive first step that would bridge into the Financing for Development Review Conference in Doha at the end of the month. Ban noted President Bush's statement that the G-20 leaders will review the crisis' impacts on emerging markets and least developed countries, and he agreed to relay GA Members' messages on the challenges they are facing and their appeal that donors fulfill their official development assistance (ODA) pledges. To succeed, the Summit should address the systemic roots of the crisis; examine its complex interactions with climate change and the food and fuel crises; and begin the process of institutional reform to create a "more inclusive" multilateral financial architecture, Ban continued. In the ensuing discussion, several delegates remarked positively on Ban's attendance at the Summit, but argued that it should be addressed in a "more global" forum such as the "G-192" (i.e., the General Assembly).

MIDDLE EAST - READOUT OF THE NOV. 9 QUARTET MEETING

¶3. The Secretary General attended the November 9 Quartet meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, where Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni reported that an agreement by the end of the year, as called for at Annapolis, was unlikely. Nevertheless, Ban called the meeting a "landmark" as it was the first time senior leaders from both sides briefed the Quartet on the status of ongoing bilateral negotiations. He was encouraged that both sides reported substantial and positive progress in

their negotiations, and Ban reiterated his commitment to achieving an end to occupation and the establishment of two states living together in peace. Several UN Delegates (i.e., Egypt, Sudan and Libya) questioned Ban whether "real" progress has been made and decried the "confidential nature" of the bilateral discussions. They noted the UN's role in maintaining momentum in the coming months as Israel prepares to hold elections and during the United States' political transition.

DRC - SYG HEARTENED BY THE NOV. 7 NAIROBI MEETING

¶ 4. At a November 7 emergency summit of regional Heads of State in Nairobi, which the Secretary General attended, leaders renewed their call for a cease-fire in eastern DRC and voiced support for a mechanism chaired by Kenyan President Kibaki to reach a political solution to the conflict. Characterizing the meeting as "frank and open," Ban stated that he was encouraged by the outcome. Delegates, primarily from the region, called on MONUC forces to establish peace and stop the "genocide and humanitarian crimes" perpetrated by armed groups in the DRC's North Kivu province. Ban described MONUC forces as "overstretched," and stressed that lasting peace will only come through a political solution. The DRC Ambassador appealed for international assistance for the Congolese population in North Kivu affected by the fighting. Rwanda's Ambassador Nsengemana asserted that peace would not be possible with ex-FAR and Interahamwe "genocidal" forces still in the region. Nsengemana also accused UN Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Edmund Mulet of

disseminating "false rumors" that Rwandan forces are present in DRC to "pillage resources."

DARFUR - UPDATE ON UNAMID DEPLOYMENTS

¶ 5. The African Union chief negotiator continues to develop a framework agreement for a political solution to the conflict in Darfur, the Secretary General reported. He added that the UN plans to deploy between 14,000 and 16,000 UNAMID forces (60% of its total commitment) by the end of the year, and expects that figure to rise to 80-85 percent of the total commitment by March, 2009. He remarked, however, that UNAMID's success will depend on the cooperation and support of the Government of Sudan. Sudan's Ambassador hoped "the UN would be part of the solution and not part of the problem" and sought its backing for a "homegrown" peace initiative (NFI) concluded over the November 5-6 weekend.

TRIP TO ASIA

¶ 6. On a recent trip to Asia, Ban attended the second Global Forum on Migration and Development in Manila, where attendees focused on harnessing the benefits of migration to meet development goals. While at the Forum, members commented on the impact of the financial crisis on migrant workers and the lower expected remittances due to the economic downturn. In India, the Secretary General met with NGO leaders to discuss climate change. He also reviewed first-hand the progress of Nepal's democratization, calling for that country's General Assembly to begin its work without delay and to complete the drafting of its new constitution. While in Bangladesh, Ban visited several microfinance projects and delivered the message that the UN expects free and credible parliamentary elections there next month.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

¶ 7. Ban welcomed the Saudi initiative to convene a November 12-13 Interfaith Dialogue at the UN. He expressed the expectation that the meeting would promote the values common to all religions in order to fight extremism and hatred.

UN BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT REFORM

¶ 8. In the face of the ongoing financial, food, and fuel crises, and the impact of climate change, the SYG observed that there are a number of emerging issues requiring UN budget and human resources. He pledged his personal assistance, and that of the Secretariat, to provide resources in a better, more effective manner.

Khalilzad